

## SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

Five alternatives were developed in the course of preparing this *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. The alternatives grew out of park purpose, significance, and emphasis statements. Park purpose statements were based on the park's legislation and legislative history, other special designations, and NPS policies; they reaffirm the reasons for which Isle Royale was set aside as part of the national park system and provide a foundation for park management and use. Significance statements capture the essence of the park's importance to the country's natural and cultural heritage. Emphasis statements were also written and incorporate key resources and stories that characterize Isle Royale National Park. They serve as broad guiding principles for park programs and for priority setting.

Before and during preparation of the alternatives several newsletters were sent out and public meetings were held to gather input. The original alternative D was revised and became the proposed action, which was reviewed as part of the *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. It has been further modified as a result of comments received. The *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* is intended to guide the management of Isle Royale National Park over at least the next 15–20 years.

### ALTERNATIVES

**Alternative A** is the no-action, or status quo, alternative and provides a baseline for comparison of the other four alternatives. **The proposed action** is intended to meet the diverse expectations and needs of Isle Royale visitors while emphasizing the natural quiet that is fundamental to wilderness experiences. All park areas would be available to all visitors as long as users participate in ways that are consistent with the access, facilities, and opportunities provided. **Alternative B** would expand facilities

and services at the ends of the island and create a more primitive experience toward the center. Cultural resources would be preserved only in areas at the ends of the island. Use limits would be imposed in some zones. Some facilities in developed areas would be expanded to serve visitors preparing to enter the backcountry.

**Alternative C** would scale back all development to create a more primitive park. No interpretive media or formal programs would be offered on the island. All cultural resources would be documented and allowed to deteriorate. A narrower range of experiences would be available. Visitor numbers would be lowered and use limits would be instituted islandwide. Concessions and related facilities would be removed. **Alternative D** was modified to become the proposed action, above. **Alternative E** would allow management of the park to continue as it is now, but visitor numbers would be controlled and would be low. Historic structures would be preserved according to significance. A variety of uses would continue and would take place across the island.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The potential impacts of the actions in the alternatives on natural resources, cultural resources, visitor use and experiences, park operations, and the socioeconomic environment have been evaluated. In general, all alternatives would better protect the park's natural resources than the current management direction (alternative A). Alternative C would provide the most benefit to natural resources, but would have the most negative effects on cultural resources and on visitor use. The proposed action and alternative E would best protect cultural resources. Impacts on park operations from the alternatives would be mixed; the workload would remain roughly the same (except in alternative C, where it would be reduced), but the emphasis would change depending on the alternative. The alternatives would not appreciably affect the socioeconomic environment.